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# The Silver Studio art reference collection

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This article examines a collection of art portfolios and visual reference books published in Britain, France, Germany and Japan between the end of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth. The Silver Studio acquired them as design reference sources, rather than – as was frequently the case with similar items in other collections - from the compulsion of the connoisseur or bibliophile. Most are large format portfolios, generally loose leaf rather than bound, with some volumes stating explicitly that they were intended as design reference for the practising designer or craftsman. That they were frequently used for exactly this purpose is attested by the fact that many are paint-spattered, suggesting that they might have been propped open on the bench in front of designers as they worked. This article seeks to unpick their significance as a subset of the Silver Studio Collection as a whole, in the context of the Studio as a working design practice.

## **The Silver Studio as a business**

The Silver Studio was a commercial design practice that produced designs for wallpapers and textiles. Founded in 1880 by Arthur Silver, the Studio became a successful business selling designs to manufacturers and retailers across Britain and Europe.<sup>1</sup> It was based in Brook Green in Hammersmith, west London. After Arthur Silver's death in 1896 the Studio continued under the management of his son, Rex, until it closed in 1963.

## **The Silver Studio Collection now**

When the Silver Studio closed in the early 1960s the contents were given to what was then the Hornsey College of Art (which subsequently became part of Middlesex University). It was hoped that the contents of a working commercial design studio would be a useful resource for students who were themselves learning to be commercial artists. The mass of objects, which had once formed the background to numerous working lives, began their transition to 'museum collection'. In the process, a small number of key examples of textiles

and wallpapers were transferred to the Victoria and Albert Museum: by that point the objects as a whole group had not yet acquired the status of 'museum collection', so the idea that it should all remain together seemed not to apply. From then onwards, the remaining contents of the Studio, including its output (the designs); the accumulated visual resources (examples of wallpapers and textiles, as well as books and portfolios and other kinds of ephemera); and much of the paperwork that provided evidence for the running of the business, solidified into what became known as the Silver Studio Collection. Items that had previously been part of everyday use were consolidated into categories that made sense to curators. It became a 'collection' with delineated boundaries, rather than a random accumulation, a flexible and permeable resource that could be added to or dispersed as required.

Throughout the 1970s and 80s, those who managed the collection attempted to make sense of this mountain of papers, books, designs, wallpapers and textiles in their care. During the 80s and 90s, the scholarship around the collections tended to focus on the wallpapers and textiles as evidence for social history and design history narratives. Since the Silver Studio had designed for a range of clients across the mass market over a long period, the fruits of its labours could be seen as a kind of barometer for the changing tastes and aspirations of a broad swathe of the British population. New acquisitions tended to emphasise this aspect; the Silver Studio had already contained a number of books, trade catalogues and magazines relating to the design and decoration of ordinary homes, but more were acquired in the 80s and 90s to build up what became known as MoDA's Domestic Design Collection.

In addition, for a period in the early 2000s, the focus of the museum was more on the Silver Studio's output in the sense of its contribution to the appearance of British domestic interiors between the late nineteenth and mid twentieth centuries. Less attention was paid, during this period, to the Studio as a working design practice, so the material acquired to aid the design process was often overlooked. Partly for this reason, and partly because of their bibliographic idiosyncrasies, the portfolios within the collection were not catalogued along with the rest of the books, so that they were sidelined and forgotten until only a few years ago.

## **A Working Studio**

The Silver Studio employed a varying number of designers throughout its long history, but their names are now mostly lost to history.<sup>2</sup> Unlike his near-contemporary, William Morris, Arthur Silver was not concerned with challenging factory production; rather he was interested

in the translation of fashionable ideas into the realities and economic imperatives of design for mass production. In an article of around 1889, Arthur Silver described himself as, “a professional designer who is well aware of the movements in public taste, as well as familiar with the mechanical requirements of the factory...”<sup>3</sup> He argued that this enabled him to produce designs that, “would satisfy the most artistic critic and yet be likely to prove commercially profitable”. As a designer, Silver saw it as his role to provide what the consumer wanted while at the same time, “to do the very best to make the design as artistic as possible...One must face the problem boldly, which is to supply saleable designs of artistic merit”.<sup>4</sup> His primary concern as head of the Studio was to sell designs to retailers and manufacturers. The goods would then be produced under that client’s own name, or by one company on behalf of yet another.<sup>5</sup> The Silver Studio as the originator of design ideas was not therefore visible to their ultimate customers, the consumers or wallpapers and textiles. The Studio’s daybooks show that by 1891 the Studio was selling around three hundred designs per year. It was dealing with over forty customers, ranging from those who bought only a handful of designs per year to those who bought considerably more. The success of the business depended on their reputation as suppliers of workable designs to these clients, which included companies such as Liberty & Co, Sanderson, Jeffrey and Co and many more.

With this in mind, it was imperative that the Studio’s employees maintain a good general awareness of design trends in order to be able to produce designs that would satisfy the market. Consequently, the Studio accumulated a large amount of material as visual reference, of which these art portfolios represent only a small proportion. In an article in *The Studio* magazine of 1894, the Silver Studio was described as being full of visual reference material similar to that collected by artists: “Photographs after Botticelli and other old masters, panels of lustrous enamels and gesso-work, scraps of fine fabrics, and books of Japanese drawings...”<sup>6</sup> (Fig.1) Using these sources, the Silver Studio designers developed ideas for their designs for wallpapers and textiles, while adapting them to appeal to British mass market tastes.

## **Portfolios in the Silver Studio Collection**

As well as the Studio’s original designs on paper, and samples of wallpapers and textiles, the collection contained the Studio’s reference library of books and portfolios. The majority of the books were catalogued in the 1990s, but a small sub-set was overlooked. It is this smaller

‘collection within a collection’ which has only relatively recently been rediscovered which forms the focus of this article. The following is an attempt to sketch the key points of interest of this collection and to suggest further areas of research. Even this preliminary examination demonstrates that consideration of the sorts of publications that the Silver Studio had in its reference library will enable us to understand more about the way that new design ideas were disseminated to the mass market. This was not the product of a straightforward ‘trickle-down effect’; rather the portfolios in this collection point to the fact that Silver Studio designers were engaged in a complex process of borrowing and refashioning of design ideas, negotiating the competing demands of freshness, familiarity, taste, and the requirements of mass market manufacturing for cost-effective products which would actually sell. The designers who worked for the Silver Studio did not leave evidence (in the form of letters, diaries and so on) of how they used these portfolios. So we can only surmise about their usefulness as design reference sources, based on the portfolios’ existence in the collection at all, on the evidence of their use in the form of paint splashes, and on their similarity to various examples of the Studio’s output.

The late nineteenth century saw the publication of an increasing number of large format portfolios. Often they were expensively and beautifully produced, sometimes with the stated intention of providing a design resource for practising designers or craftsmen, although they were frequently also purchased by wealthy collectors. They were appealing to purchasers both because they contained beautiful images, and because they were beautifully designed and produced objects in their own right. They now have a status as designed objects, and relatively few survive in public collections: since they were produced in loose-leaf form they were frequently broken up and sold as separate plates. However, their role as vehicles for the dissemination of new ideas in the fine and decorative arts seems to have been barely explored by today’s scholars.

As designers of textiles and wallpapers in the last decades of the nineteenth century, it was natural that the Silver Studio should be drawn towards publications that showcased the collections of textile museums. Some of the earlier portfolios in the collection are volumes of images of museum objects from collections across Europe. Earlier in the century, textile publications had tended towards attempts to locate and catalogue old textiles, especially church vestments.<sup>7</sup> By the latter decades of the century, the need to inspire and educate

designers within the context of a rapidly industrialising textile industry had led to the establishment of a number of textile museums across Europe.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, advances in photographic technology provided the impetus for textile collectors to attempt to produce publications of textiles in public museums and private collections. This impetus sprang partly from the nineteenth century desire to catalogue everything, and partly from the belief that such publications might provide inspiration for textile designers. Industrialisation prompted fears about the decline in standards of production, therefore it was hoped that the publication of images of the finest medieval and renaissance examples in museum collections might improve contemporary design standards, and that more elusive quality, ‘taste’.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the earliest examples of this within the Silver Studio collection are the three volumes of photographs of historic textiles from the collections of the Dresden Museum, published in 1888, 1889 and 1890.<sup>10</sup> They consist of black and white collotype prints of images of historic textiles from Dresden’s collections. (Fig. 2) The Dresden Museum of Decorative Arts had been established, like the South Kensington Museum, as an educational establishment for the improvement of standards of manufacture, as well as a public museum. It opened in 1876 as the Royal Museum of Decorative Arts, and its original purpose, alongside the Art School, was to be an institution dedicated to training and further education with the goal of raising standards in manufactured goods.<sup>11</sup> Hence Arthur Silver and his employees were exactly the intended customers for a publication of images from its collections aimed at educating designers and improving standards of manufacture.

In a similar vein, the Silver Studio collection includes three volumes of a publication called *Der Formenschatz*, dating from 1879, 1880 and 1881.<sup>12</sup> This was published in English as *Art Treasure* (although the Silver Studio Collection contains the German editions), and consists of black and white lithographic images of works of art from various collections and churches across Europe. (Fig. 3) The selection comprises both fine and applied art, including architecture, paintings, glass, textiles, ceramics and portraits, and it was intended as “a source of instruction and inspiration for artists and professionals, as for all friends of beauty...”

From the perspective of an image-saturated twenty-first century it is perhaps difficult to appreciate the impact of these collections on the Silver Studio’s designers. These early volumes contain of course only black and white photographs, so we can surmise that

designers used them to gain an understanding of the use of pattern and scale, rather than of colour palette. Arthur Silver was extremely enthusiastic about the use of photographic images as resources, even going so far as to publish his own selection of photographic images from the collections of the South Kensington Museum.<sup>13</sup> For him, a successful design was not simply a pleasing surface pattern, but was one that demonstrated a thorough understanding of the techniques of industrial production which would bring it to life. Photographic images of historic textiles were therefore important because the ability to see the warp and weft of a textile was vital to truly understanding it, and without this a designer could not produce a workable – that is, a genuinely profitable – design.

A rather different approach to visual inspiration is embodied within the six volumes of *Der Moderne Stil*, which was published in Germany from 1899 by Julius Hoffman.<sup>14</sup> These volumes brought together images of items designed in the style then becoming known as Art Nouveau. (Figs 4 and 5) They present an altogether richer – at least to modern eyes – assortment of visual sources; the images were still monochrome, but the juxtaposition of fabrics, jewellery, furniture, ceramics and wallpapers must have been exciting and stimulating for the Silver Studio's designers. And indeed the Silver Studio was not simply a consumer of these images, but an active participant: several Silver Studio designs were featured in the second volume, having been previously published in *Art et Décoration* and *The Studio* magazine in 1897.

By the 1920s, the Silver Studio was continuing to acquire portfolios that were compilations of the best examples from European collectors, but by this time the focus had shifted to Paris, and the emphasis was on the art of the East. In this period, images of Japanese and Chinese textiles were published in a number of volumes based on French collections. Examples in the Silver Studio Collection include a number of volumes published in Paris by Armand Guérinet and Alain Calavas under the imprint "Librairie d'Art Décoratif".<sup>15</sup> One example, *Les Étoffes de la Chine*, (Fig. 6) published by Calavas in Paris, featured Chinese textiles illustrated in black and white and colour.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, *Étoffes de Soie du Japon* (Fig. 7) edited by Henri Ernst, featured examples of Japanese textiles from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs and the Musée des Tissus, Lyon.<sup>17</sup> It seems possible that the reason for acquiring these volumes was not so much an interest in historic textiles *per se*, but a fascination with colour, texture and pattern. Indeed, in volumes such as *Étoffes de Soie du Japon* the close-up nature of the

images meant that textiles were presented not as whole objects, but as examples of colour and pattern.

Interestingly, though the introduction to *Étoffes de la Chine* was written by Henri d'Ardenne de Tizac, the curator of the Musée Cernuschi (Museum of Asian Arts in Paris), the objects seem to have been drawn from a number of different private Parisian collections. One of the collectors mentioned was the artist Eugène Alain Séguy, who was himself the author of eleven volumes of pochoir images (hand coloured lithographs), intended to inspire decorative designers. Again, the appearance of Séguy as both collector of textiles and author of numerous books of sources for designers points to the rich interconnectedness between designers, collections and published sourcebooks. The Silver Studio's copy of Séguy's *Suggestions* (Fig. 8) seems to have been a direct source of inspiration for a number of designs in the 1920s and 30s.<sup>18</sup> One example is a design for a textile by Lewis Jones of the Silver Studio, dating from 1932, (Fig. 9) which clearly picks up on the colour palette and abstracted shapes indicated by Séguy.

Aside from the portfolios based on museum collections, the majority of publications can be seen to be in some way concerned with the representation of natural forms. The debate over the appropriate means to depict nature within two-dimensions (ie on wallpapers and textiles) had been at the heart of the design reform debates of the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup> The need to find new ways of presenting natural, and particularly floral form, was clearly an on-going concern in the twentieth century. In 1953 one correspondent noted:

...There is the "bunk" which a well known (in his day) designer said to me, *I never buy books, I go to nature* – if you have enough nature in Brook Green so well and good, but any designer must exhaust his own vocabulary in years and want "refreshers" for idea[s] in the shape of the newest idea illustrated by books etc.<sup>20</sup>

It was inevitable that the designers employed by the Silver Studio would have wanted to gather images of natural forms to inspire their design work, for several reasons. In the most straightforward sense they required reference material for the placement of a bud, the angle of growth of a leaf, and so on, when drawing designs based on plant forms. A good understanding of the botanical components of flowers would have been important for designers who were attempting to avoid clumsiness in their floral designs, while still achieving something that would work successfully in repeat. Unlike botanical drawings that



are intended to provide a clear and accurate representation of the form of a plant, the challenge for designers of textiles and wallpapers is to create floral motifs which are at once recognisable as a particular species, but which also work as a satisfactory repeating pattern.<sup>21</sup> Two of the earliest reference works on natural forms in the Silver Studio collection are Emile Favart's *Flowers and Plants Volume 1* published in around 1880, and *Flore Naturelle* by Henry Lambert, published around the same time (Figs 10 and 11)<sup>22</sup>. Both feature beautiful, rather naturalistic, studies of plants.

The portfolio collection includes a number of volumes of photographic studies of nature, which doubtless served as botanical reference works. Some of the most beautiful are the three volumes of collotypes by the Japanese photographer Kazumasa Ogawa, *Chrysanthemums of Japan*, *Lilies of Japan* and *Some Japanese Flowers*. These were published in the 1890s, and contain stunning images of plants and natural forms.<sup>23</sup> Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a number of new plants were introduced into Britain from Japan, including new species of irises and hydrangeas previously unseen in Europe.<sup>24</sup> The Silver Studio designers required a good knowledge of fashionable trends, including a familiarity with exotic Japanese plant forms. It is clear that they incorporated some of these floral forms into their designs, both in their rather naturalistic designs of the early 1890s, as well as the more stylised, Aesthetic movement or early Art Nouveau representations of nature that we now think of as more typical of the period. (Figs 12 and 13)

Through the use of visual resources such as the Ogawa photographic images, the Silver Studio took new and – to Western eyes – unfamiliar flowers, but depicted them in conventional Western ways. Sometimes, though, it is harder to see how particular works would have had a direct use in the development of new designs for wallpapers and textiles. One example is the rather beautiful volume entitled *Baumstudien* by Martin Gerlach, (Fig. 14) which contains fantastic studies of trees. Published in 1894, this volume, like the Ogawa volumes presented conventional photographic studies of nature for use by artists and designers.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, *Fleurs photographiées en plein air*, published in Paris in around 1925, contains beautifully photographed studies of unusual plants.<sup>26</sup> (Fig. 15)

As well as naturalistic drawings and drawings from photographic representations of nature, the collection contains a number of volumes which depict more stylised natural forms. One of the loveliest is *Die Blume in Modernen Fantasiestudien*, which was published by Calavas with illustrations by Joseph Pilfers featuring stylised Art Nouveau natural forms.<sup>27</sup> (Figs 16

and 17) This volume seems to have been extensively used by the designers at the Silver Studio if the numerous paint splashes can be taken as evidence of frequency of use. (Fig. 18)

## Rex Silver and the portfolio collection

We can surmise that both Arthur Silver and his son Rex acquired books steadily throughout the Studio's long history, and that they bought them at around the date of publication. Some correspondence survives between Rex Silver and book dealers, and many of the volumes bear book plates with details of the dealer's address. For example, *Étoffes de la Chine*, (Fig. 6) bears a sticker stating that it was 'sold by J Tiranti, Importer & Exporter of Architectural Books, 13, Maple Street, Tottenham Court Road, London W'. But, as with any business, there was a need to make difficult choices about how much to invest in 'research and development' at the expense of current profitability.

Aside from Tiranti, the Studio's main supplier of books seems to have been Frank Lewis, a publisher and book dealer based in Essex. He was the author and publisher of several volumes of books about textiles, including *English Chintz: a history of printed fabrics from earliest times until the present day*.<sup>28</sup> As well as publishing his own books, Frank Lewis seems to have imported numerous volumes of books and portfolios that were sold to designers like Rex Silver around the country, conducting his business by post.

Correspondence survives between Rex and Frank between the 1920s and 1950s, and while it is possible to directly link the letters to only a few specific volumes within the collection, many more bear his bookseller's label, suggesting that a considerable proportion of the collection was derived from him.

Much of the correspondence makes clear that Lewis often sent books to Silver on approval. Silver would either agree to buy them, or would send them back, often with protestations that, while he liked them very much, they were beyond his means. One exchange relates to a particular book called *The Costume of Nō Play in Japan*<sup>29</sup> (Figs 19 and 20). A letter from Frank Lewis, dated twelfth of May 1936, states:

I sent you a little time ago a work entitled THE COSTUME OF NO PLAY IN JAPAN. You returned [it] at the time although you were interested in the book. I now have a copy, slightly soiled, which I could let you have for 3gns: (published 5gns:) Would you care to take it?

Rex replied on the twenty-third of May:

Many thanks for your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> inst and for another sight of the Japanese book. I am sorry I cannot afford three guineas, but could offer you two for this, if you would care to accept it.

He received a response from Frank Lewis on the twenty-fifth, agreeing to his terms:

Thanks for your letter. As the copy you have of the Japanese book is the last I have I shall be pleased to accept your offer of 2 gns: for it.<sup>30</sup>

The correspondence between Lewis and Silver also makes clear that Rex did not hesitate to sell books as well as to acquire them. For example, one omission from the collection that now seems odd is Owen Jones' *Grammar of Ornament*. It would seem likely that any design firm which had been established from the end of the nineteenth century should have owned this key reference book. It appears that the Studio may have once owned a copy but that Rex entrusted it to Frank Lewis for re-sale in 1928, perhaps seeing it as outdated. In September 1928, Frank Lewis wrote to Rex Silver:

Regarding the books I have just had an enquiry for Owen Jones, so hope this may be a sale for you. Will advise you in due course. Regarding the Batley book I am afraid this will not sell, while the Arabian Nights I am unable to get the price so far. What is the lowest you can accept for these?

A few weeks later, on the fifth of November, he was able to confirm in a further letter that "...Owen Jones is now sold, and cheque is herewith for same".<sup>31</sup>

The role of Frank Lewis in publishing and disseminating design source material to Britain's design community seems not to have been explored, and would doubtless prove fascinating. Another of his titles, *Best Design versus Best Seller In relation to textiles and wallpapers*, indicates just how central he was to the debates around the meaning of 'good design' for those like Rex Silver who were producing designs for the mass market.<sup>32</sup>

By 1953, Lewis must have been aware that the Silver Studio's designers were failing to keep up with the times, and as an old friend (he had by that point done business with Rex Silver for over twenty years), and in the spirit of his own commercial interests, he felt moved to write a long letter recommending more book purchases. His point was that by failing to invest in new

books, the Silver Studio was in danger of falling behind and making itself commercially unviable. He expressed surprise that Rex had refused to subscribe to a new *Survey of World Textiles* publication that he was developing. Clearly it was in his interests for Rex to agree to buy more books, but he was probably right that Rex's reluctance to do so could only lead in the long run to reduced turnover:

I should not like you to be penny foolish and turn down books for the sake of a few pounds which can be made to produce ideas – I have one Designer who spends never less than £50 a year, he allocates a pound a week to his books and he works on every new purchase until he thinks he has extracted the value from it, then turns to the next newest book – the result is he seems to be keeping abreast with ideas and doing himself well, and your purchases these past seven years do not look so well compared with what you ought to purchase.

Lewis may perhaps have been aware that the Silver Studio was beginning to struggle financially; in the post-war period it cannot have been easy for a long-established business to adjust itself to a rapidly changing environment. His letter makes it clear that he knows he is somewhat overstepping the bounds of a business relationship, but he hoped Rex Silver would understand that his comments were meant to be constructive:

Nothing to do with me of course, but some 30 years specialising in design, like you I have seen many Designers come and go, but there is one thing that definitely stands out, we have the good old Studios who[se] purchases [ie of books] are steadily maintained and they are without doubt keeping [their] turnover up...I know you have a fine collection, but you are not adding to it at the rate you did, I looked over the Library list of yours some time ago, and many of them you could frankly scrap of course as they have become outmoded and so dated that they will not pay dividends any more, but many of the good old standard books are of course still good.<sup>33</sup>

Lewis's letter concludes with a kindly, "if I never hear from you again, I shall know you think I am a rude fellow, but truly I have the Studio's interest at heart, and want to see it going on to 1980". Rex Silver did respond, and does seem to have heeded some of the advice, although his book purchasing habits never reached the levels that Lewis would have doubtless recommended, and (perhaps partly because of this) the Studio did not survive beyond the early 1960s.

## Conclusion

Most of the portfolios in the Silver Studio Collection can be found in ones and twos in other specialist art libraries across the UK. However, the Studio's portfolios are unusual in that they were part of a working collection rather than one developed by a book collector or educational institution, and unique in their relationship to the work of a commercial design studio. This brief survey has outlined a few of the key volumes within this collection, highlighting those that have a direct bearing on the Silver Studio's design output. There is potential for much further research, and it is hoped that this article might provide the impetus for further use.

These volumes have more to say about the uses of visual resources in the development of commercial designs; and about the history of photography and of different printing techniques. These portfolios seem to exist at the intersection between museum collections and private collections; between art and commerce, and indeed between East and West. They occupy a rarely-explored space within the history of the book and of publishing; and represent a fascinating conjuncture between reading and looking; between academic learning and the craft of making; and between the fine and decorative arts and the everyday grubby business of producing a design which sells. These publications hint at the complex relationship between production and consumption: Silver Studio designers were consumers of these books and the ideas embodied in them; but were also producers, using ideas from a variety of sources to create designs for wallpapers and textiles which had mass market appeal.

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1 <sup>1</sup>Mark Turner, *The Silver Studio Collection* (Lund Humphries for Middlesex Polytechnic,

The Silver Studio Collection is now part of the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture, Middlesex University. See [www.moda.mdx.ac.uk](http://www.moda.mdx.ac.uk). It was awarded Designated status in 2008 in recognition of its national and international quality and significance.

2 <sup>2</sup> We know the names of designers such as John Illingworth Kay and Harry Napper who worked for the Studio in the 1890s, although attribution of specific designs to individual designers is difficult. Keren Protheroe has written about the anonymous nature of the work of many of the designers who worked for the Silver Studio in the early twentieth century. Keren Protheroe, *Petal Power: Floral fashion and women designers at the Silver Studio, 1910-1940*, (Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture, London, 2011)

3 <sup>3</sup> Arthur Silver, handwritten notes about the Silvern Series, (Silver Studio Collection, Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture, n.d, 1889?), 1

4 <sup>4</sup> "A Studio of Design: An Interview with Mr Arthur Silver", *The Studio* magazine, (Vol. 3, 1894) 117-122

5 <sup>5</sup> For example, the Silver Studio sold ten designs directly to Liberty & Co in 1891, but also sold fourteen to the printing firm Stead McAlpin. It is possible that several of these were produced by Stead McAlpin for Liberty & Co, thus making the normal conventions of design attribution difficult to apply. Silver Studio Daybook, 1891-1898, (Silver Studio Collection, Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture)

6 <sup>6</sup>"A Studio of Design: An Interview with Mr Arthur Silver", op.cit

7 <sup>7</sup> Daniel Rock, *South Kensington Museum, Textile Fabrics: A descriptive catalogue of the collection of church-vestments, dresses, silk-stuffs, needlework and tapestries forming that section of the Museum*, (Science and Art Department of the Committee of the Council on Education, London, 1870)

8 <sup>8</sup> For a useful summary of this aspect of textile history see <http://egressfoundation.net>

9 <sup>9</sup> David Brett, *On Decoration*, (Lutterworth, Cambridge, 1992); Anthony Burton, "The Uses of the South Kensington art collections", *Journal of the History of Collections*, (Vol. 14, no. 1, 2002) 79-95

10 <sup>10</sup> Emil Kumsch, *Stoffmuster des XVI-XVIII Jahrhunderts*, (Series 1-3, Stengel & Markert, Kunstanstalt für Lichtdruck, Dresden, 1888, 1890, 1891) (SR197-199)

11 <sup>11</sup> Igor Jenzen, *Vom Schenken und Sammeln: 125 Jahre Kunstgewerbemuseum Dresden*, (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, 2001)

12 <sup>12</sup> Georg Hirth, *Der Formenschatz*, (Munich & Leipzig, 1879, 1880, 1881) (SR131-133). Hirth is best known for founding the magazine *Jugend* in 1896, which popularized Art Nouveau style.

13 <sup>13</sup> Zoë Hendon, "The Silvern Series: photographs from the collections of the South Kensington Museum," (V&A Online Journal, forthcoming, 2012)

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- 14      <sup>14</sup> Julius Hoffman, *Der Moderne Stil* vols 1-6, (Stuttgart, Hoffman, 1899-1905) (SR159-164)
- 15      <sup>15</sup> Calavas and Guérinet were artists and photographers as well as publishers, and collaborated with many of the French designers of that period. Guérinet, in particular, was responsible for publishing a number of volumes of images of architecture, interior design, and reproductions of works in the French National Museums.
- 16      <sup>16</sup> *Les Étoffes de la Chine, tissus & broderies*, (Librairie des arts décoratifs, Paris, 1914) (SR194)
- 17      <sup>17</sup> Henri Ernst, *Étoffes de soie du Japon "Spécimens exposés au Musée et à la Bibliothèque de l'Union centrale des arts décoratifs et au Musée des tissus de la Chambre de commerce de Lyon"* (Paris, 1925) (SR179). Other volumes by Henri Ernst also in the collection are *Tapisseries et étoffes coptes* (Paris, 1924) (SR184); *Toiles Imprimees de la Perse e de l'Inde, d'apres les documents Recueillis par Oberkampf* (1925); (SR180 & 181). All were based on collections of Paris museums, and consist of hand-coloured collotypes mounted and pasted in individually.
- 18      <sup>18</sup> Eugène Alain Séguy, *Suggestions pour étoffes et tapis, 60 motifs en couleur*, (C. Massin & Cie, Paris, 1923) (SR236)
- 19      <sup>19</sup> David Brett, *On Decoration*, op.cit
- 20      <sup>20</sup> Silver Studio Business Correspondence; letter from Frank Lewis to Rex Silver, 24<sup>th</sup> July 1953 (Silver Studio Collection, SBR 16/3)
- 21      <sup>21</sup> Gill Saunders, *Picturing Plants: an analytical history of botanical illustration*, (Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1995)
- 22      <sup>22</sup> Emile Favart, *Flowers and plants from nature: 60 plates in two volumes*, (RT Mounteney, Nottingham, 1880) (SR172). Emile Favart was a pseudonym for Thomas William Hammond (1854-1925), a Nottingham artist and lace designer. Henry Lambert, *Flore Naturelle etudies par Henry Lambert*, ed. Alain Calavas, (Librairie des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1880) (SR226). In fact the Lambert volume contains a mixture of collotypes and chalk lithographs and may also contain images originally from other sources. The loose-leaf nature of these albums mean that they rarely survive intact, having been frequently broken up and sold separately.
- 23      <sup>23</sup> Kazumasa Ogawa, *Some Japanese flowers*, (Kelley and Walsh, Yokohama, 1897) (SR189); *Lilies of Japan*, (Kelly and Walsh, Yokohama, 1896) (SR188); *Chrysanthemums of Japan*, (Kelly and Walsh, Yokohama, 1895) (SR187). Kazumasa Ogawa (1860-1929) is considered one of the pioneers of photography and photomechanical printing in Japan, and these works demonstrate his skill as a creator of still-life photographic images.
- 24      <sup>24</sup> Knowledge of Japanese flora was disseminated in the West through the importation of the plants themselves, through their representation within decorative art objects such as ceramics, and through botanical drawings, seed catalogues and photographs. Anne Farrer, *A Garden Bequest - Plants From Japan: Portrayed In Books Paintings And Decorative Art Of 300 Years*, (The Japan Society, 2001)
- 25      <sup>25</sup> Martin Gerlach, *Baumstudien* (Gerlach & Schenk, Vienna, 1894) (SR206). Gerlach is also known for less conventional, microscopic images of nature, although these are not held within this collection. See Astrid Mahler, (trans. Elborg Forster), "A World of Forms from Nature: New Impulses for the Aesthetic of the *Jugendstil*", *Visual Resources*, (Vol. 23, no. 1-2, 2007) 21-37  
See also the 'past exhibitions' page of this site: <http://www.alfred-ehrhhardt-stiftung.de/>

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26       <sup>26</sup> Alain Calavas (ed.), *Fleurs photographiées en plein air. Deuxième série* (Librairie des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1925) (SR176)

27       <sup>27</sup> Joseph Pilters, *Die Blume in Modernen Fantasiestudien* (Hessling, 1900) (SR222)

28       <sup>28</sup> Frank Lewis, *English Chintz: a history of printed fabrics from earliest times until the present day*, (Frank Lewis, Leigh on Sea, 1935) (BADDA1115). Once again, the Silver Studio was not simply a consumer of the visual resources available, but an active participant in an ongoing design dialogue: plate 152 of this book is a fabric designed by the Silver Studio and produced by Story & Co Ltd.

29       <sup>29</sup> Iwao Kongow, *The later works of the costume of nō play in Japan*, (Meiji-shobo, Tokyo, 1935) (SR217)

30       <sup>30</sup> Correspondence between Frank Lewis and Rex Silver, May 1936 (Silver Studio Business Correspondence, SBR 46/5)

31       <sup>31</sup> Correspondence between Frank Lewis and Rex Silver, September-November, 1928 (Silver Studio Business Correspondence, SBR 18/5)

32       <sup>32</sup> Frank Lewis, *Best Design versus Best Seller in relation to textiles and wallpapers*, (Frank Lewis, Leigh-on-Sea, 1965) (BADDA1389)

33       <sup>33</sup> Letter from Frank Lewis to Rex Silver, 24<sup>th</sup> July 1953 (Silver Studio Business Correspondence, SBR 16/3)